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CONVENTION

OF

FREEDMEN'S COMMISSIONS,

HELD AT

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, JULY 19 AND 20, 1864.

MINUTES

OF THE

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CINCINNATI:

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REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

FIRST DAY.

Afternoon Session, July 19, 1864.

In pursuance of a call issued by the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission of Cincinnati, a Convention assembled at Roberts Methodist Episcopal Chapel, in the city of Indianapolis, at three o'clock, P. M.

Colonel James Blake, of Indianapolis, was called to the chair, and William Penn Nixon, of Cincinnati, was elected Secretary.

The meeting was then opened with prayer by Rev. S. B. Page, of Cleveland.

The following call was read by the Secretary:

Cincinnati, June 21, 1864.

To the Board of Directors of ————

Gentlemen,—The Board of Directors of the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, at its last meeting, appointed a committee to correspond in regard to holding a Convention of the Associations of the West, laboring in behalf of the National freedmen. Our Board is convinced that such a meeting would benefit the common cause.

These Associations are engaged in the same work, and labor in the same field. We have teachers in the same schools; agents and other representatives in the same camps; and often act through each other's agencies. We feel an interest in each other's success. By a Convention this interest may be increased, our sympathies quickened, and an understanding brought about that would do much to prevent friction in our operations, and disagreements among our representatives in the field.

Our Associations are organized for a great and difficult work. Providence has opened before us the most extended field that ever invited humane and benevolent effort—a field that must still increase. Its very magnitude demands the most efficient application of the contributions of which we are made the almoners. Difficulties arising from the nature of the work, the condition of society in the South, our relation to officers and agents of the Government, and other circumstances, have embarrassed us from the first, and still continue. These can only be successfully overcome by a wise direction of all our movements. An interchange of views, bringing together the results of our experience would enable us each to prosecute our labors more efficiently—accomplish greater good.

A Convention, generally attended by our Associations, would awaken a deeper and more general interest for our cause throughout the West, and might lead to results that would secure that influence with the Government and its representatives which seems essential to our success.

In view of these and other reasons suggested by a common experience, we propose in behalf of our Board:

1. That a Convention be held, composed of three delegates from each of the following Societies: Western Sanitary Commission, North-Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, Indiana Freedmen's Aid Commission, Cleveland Freedmen's Aid Commission, Friends' Freedmen's Society, Western Contraband Commission, and Western Freedmen's Aid Commission.
2. That it be held as early as Tuesday, July 19th.
3. That it meet at Indianapolis.
4. That a call for it be issued upon the concurrence of a majority of the above-named Associations.

Please notify us of your action as soon as practicable.

Respectfully, J. M. Walden, *Ch'man Com.*

Cincinnati, July 11, 1864.

To the Board of Directors of ————

A Convention, composed of three delegates from each Association of the West laboring for the relief of the National freedmen, will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, on Tuesday, July 19th, inst., at three o'clock, P. M. It will meet in Roberts Methodist Episcopal Chapel, on Pennsylvania-Street.

The Indiana Freedmen's Aid Commission has generously proffered to entertain the delegates, and requests them to report themselves at Dr. J. T. Boyd's office, No. 40 Pennsylvania-Street.

This call is authorized by the concurrence of the Associations, and it is to be hoped that each one will be fully represented in this the first Convention of the kind held in the West.

In behalf of the Committee. J. M. Walden, *Ch'man.*

Delegates were reported present as follows; namely: *Cleveland Freedmen's Aid Commission*—H. B. Spelman, Rev. S. B. Page, and D. W. Gage. *Contraband Relief Commission of Cincinnati*—George Graham and William R. Woolman. *Western Freedmen's Aid Commission of Cincinnati*—Rev. J. M. Walden, Rev. George M. Maxwell, and William Penn Nixon. *Indiana Freedmen's Aid Commission of Indianapolis*—Calvin Fletcher, Colonel James Blake, Rev. N. A. Hyde, Dr. J. T. Boyd, Jacob S. Willets, and Rev. J. V. R. Miller.

I. P. Evans, H. E. Peele, and Joseph Dickinson, being present, handed in a communication, saying that the Committee of the

Indiana Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends received the call for the Convention after their regular monthly meeting; no meeting had since been held for the appointment of delegates, and they were present simply as members of that committee.

On motion of Mr. Woolman, of Cincinnati, they were received and duly accredited as delegates.

A dispatch was received from J. G. Forman, of the Western Sanitary Commission, St. Louis, saying that he was detained at Terre Haute, but expected to arrive in the evening.

On motion, a Business Committee of one from each Commission was appointed, as follows: Rev. N. A. Hyde, H. B. Spelman, W. R. Woolman, Joseph Dickinson, Rev. J. M. Walden, and Rev. J. G. Forman.

After considerable discussion it was resolved to hear reports from the various Commissions before the Business Committee retired for consultation; and the Secretary was directed to call the roll of the Commissions in the order mentioned in the call.

Very interesting reports* were made for the Indiana Commission by Messrs. Boyd and Willets; for the Cleveland Commission by Mr. Spelman; for Indiana Yearly Meeting Committee of the Society of Friends by Joseph Dickinson; for the Contraband Relief Commission by George Graham; and for the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission by Rev. George M. Maxwell.

The Convention then adjourned to meet at a quarter before eight o'clock this evening.

Evening Session, July 19, 1864.

Convention met pursuant to adjournment. The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. J. R. Shipherd, of Chicago.

The minutes of the previous session were read, corrected, and approved.

Rev. J. R. Shipherd was reported as delegate from the North-Western Freedmen's Aid Commission of Chicago, and his name added to the Business Committee.

Reports from the several Commissions being in order, and the last-mentioned Commission being called, an excellent report was

* For these Reports see Appendix.

made for it by Mr. Shipherd. Excellent reports were also made by Rev. J. G. Forman for the Western Sanitary Commission, and by Rev. J. M. Walden for the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission of Cincinnati.

On motion of Mr. Nixon, it was resolved that three committees be appointed, each consisting of three members, to take in consideration and report upon the following subjects, namely:

1. The subject of opening stores for the purpose of selling goods to the freedmen.

2. The subject of uniform salaries and instructions for teachers and agents.

3. The subject of Union depots of supplies in the Mississippi Valley.

The first committee was constituted as follows: H. B. Spelman, Joseph Dickinson, and Wm. R. Woolman; the second, J. R. Shipherd, J. M. Walden, and J. T. Boyd; the third, J. G. Forman, George Graham, and William Penn Nixon.

On motion of Mr. Walden, the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That the Business Committee be directed to draw up a memorial to the President of the United States, stating the claims of our work, the difficulties under which we have labored, and the advantages of a Freedmen's Bureau.

The Convention then adjourned to meet Wednesday, July 20th, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

SECOND DAY.

Morning Session, July 20, 1864.

Convention met pursuant to adjournment. The meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. J. G. Forman, of St. Louis.

The committees raised at the session last evening submitted reports.

ON UNIFORM SALARIES AND INSTRUCTIONS.

Mr. Shipherd, chairman, made a report, which, as amended and adopted, reads as follows:

The Committee appointed to report on Uniform Instructions and Salaries for Teachers and Agents respectfully report:

We deem it impracticable to agree to any formal set of instructions or rules, and content ourselves with reporting the following minute:

At a Convention of representatives of the following Commissions, to wit, the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, the Cleveland Freedmen's Aid Commission, the Contraband Relief Commission, the Indiana Freedmen's Aid Commission, the Friends' Freedmen's Aid Commission, the North-Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, and the Western Sanitary Commission, held in Roberts Methodist Episcopal Chapel, in the city of Indianapolis, July 19 and 20, 1864, it was unanimously

1. *Resolved*, That we hereby join in instructing all agents, superintendents, and teachers employed by either of our Commissions to cherish toward each other a Christian charity, and to cooperate, as far as may be, in the common work to which they have been sent.

2. *Resolved*, That a copy of this minute, duly attested by the President and Secretary of this Convention, be furnished to all field employés of the Commissions represented here, who are already or hereafter may be employed.

3. *Resolved*, That this Convention regard it as desirable that the salaries paid to teachers be uniform, so far as practicable; and deem twenty-five dollars per month, and traveling and other necessary expenses, as an adequate average compensation.

ON OPENING STORES AMONG THE FREEDMEN.

Mr. Spelman, chairman, made a report, which, as amended and adopted, reads as follows:

The committee to whom was referred the subject of establishing stores for the sale of goods to the freedmen submit the following report:

The wisest and most useful charity is that which provides employment for the needy, thereby promoting habits of industry and self-reliance, which form the basis of a true manhood. As a means of stimulating industry and of teaching the freedmen the value of money, your committee recommend that in localities among the freedmen where goods are scarce, or where they can not be purchased at reasonable prices, stores be opened by agents having charge of the distribution of supplies under the direction of the Commission employing them, or of the Supervising Agent of the district, for the sale, exclusively to the freedmen, of such goods as they may need, at low prices, which are to be as nearly uniform as may be; and that all agents making sale of goods shall keep and render to the Commissions, or party furnishing the goods, an accurate account, at least once a month, of all sales and expenses, and shall hold the funds received subject to the order of the Commission supplying the goods.

ON UNION DEPOTS AND SUPPLIES.

Mr. Forman, chairman, made a report, which, as amended and adopted, reads as follows:

The Committee appointed to consider the subject of Union Depots of Supplies for Freedmen in the Mississippi Valley, respectfully report in favor of the establishment of such depots. They would recommend that the agents of the Freedmen's Associations, having charge of supplies at any given point, agree among themselves to procure from the Government a common depot of supplies, and appoint from their number a competent person to take charge, with such assistance as he may need; and that he keep an account of all supplies received from the several Associations, giving due credit to each, and making return to each of all distributions and sales made to the freedmen; and, should a general Supervising Agent be appointed, that the agents in charge of these Union Depots will make a full exhibit of their books, accounts, and transactions to him on his occasional visits to their several stations.

It will be understood that the agents of the several Associations represented will have the privilege of drawing from the Union Depot for distribution or sale, as they may need, to the extent of the supplies deposited there by the Commission they represent.

The Superintendent of the Union Depots will be expected to make out a monthly report to each Association having goods in store, giving the state of its accounts; and also a full quarterly report to the Supervising Agent, should one be appointed, or if not appointed, then to all the Associations represented; giving an account of the whole operations of that quarter, so that all may know what each Association has done during the quarter.

The Business Committee asking further time to report, the Convention went into a general discussion of the state of the work and its requirements, after which a recess was taken till 2 o'clock.

Afternoon Session, July 20, 1864.

At 2 o'clock, P. M., the Convention reassembled. The Business Committee, through Mr. Walden, reported the following

MEMORIAL TO THE PRESIDENT.

To Abraham Lincoln, *President of the United States:*

Respected Sir,—The undersigned delegates, representing the Associations of the West engaged in laboring for the relief of the National freedmen, coming together at Indianapolis from the States

of Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana, would respectfully represent to your Excellency, that the object of our present assembling has been to secure greater unity of action; to devise more efficient means for the supply of the physical wants of the colored people whom it has been the policy of the Administration to make free; and to provide more fully for their education, so that they may be elevated in the scale of humanity, and fitted for the privileges, duties, and responsibilities of their new position.

In thus coming together, and consulting each other in regard to the efforts heretofore made in behalf of the freed people, it has been found a subject of frequent complaint that in our labors we have been thwarted, in some instances by the negligence, and in others by the opposition of officers having charge of the posts where the freed people were collected.

In all cases we have instructed our agents and teachers to subordinate their efforts to the Military Authority. We are not advised that in any instance have our instructions been disobeyed, and would discharge any one found derelict in this particular.

While with pleasure we state that at many points we have had the hearty and cheerful co-operation of the officers in charge, it is with pain we are forced to declare that at other places, from causes already stated, our agents have found it difficult to render any efficient aid, even where that aid was most imperatively demanded. In many instances our schools have been interrupted by what seemed to be uncalled-for and unnecessary changes in the camps, and in some cases they have been entirely broken up by military orders, expelling the colored people from towns or cities, and herding them in corrals even, where many of the victims had been living in their own habitations, and supporting themselves.

Without entering into a lengthy detail of the operations of our organizations, or a further recital of the manner in which our agents and teachers have been prevented from doing the good we contemplated, we would respectfully memorialize your Excellency, as Commander-in-chief of the army of the United States, to require, by military order, the officers in charge of military posts where the freed people of color may be found to give to our agents and teachers all necessary aid and co-operation, to enable us to effect the purposes of our organization.

We would further represent that our object in the organization of all our Associations was to aid the Government, already taxed with the prosecution of the war, in relieving the wants of those made free by your Proclamation, and brought within our lines and thrown upon the care of the nation by the advance of our armies. The Government collects them together and gives them rations; these Associations endeavor to supplement this work by furnishing clothing and other needful supplies, establishing schools and supporting teachers—efforts in which the Government has co-operated by transporting these supplies, and in many instances agents and teachers, and affording them rations and quarters.

The Government has its representatives in the officers and agents of the War and Treasury Departments, with whom, in most instances, we have been able to co-operate pleasantly, and with some efficiency; but we have at all times been conscious that there was no person in the field representing both the Government and our Associations in common, because of which, wherever our efforts have been embarrassed in ways heretofore named, we have found it difficult, often impossible, to procure attention and relief.

We, therefore, respectfully urge your Excellency to appoint ——— ——— Supervising Agent of Freedmen's Affairs in the West, who shall be an authorized representative of both the Government and these Associations, and clothe him with all the authority consistent with existing military regulations; making it his duty to visit camps of freedmen, and all points where schools are located; to report as to the faithfulness or dereliction of the agents and officers of the Government and of the Associations to this work; to indicate what may be necessary to an efficient co-operation between the Government and those Associations; and generally to supervise the whole work of voluntary relief in behalf of the freedmen: the salary of said agent to be paid by the several Associations joining in this recommendation.

The speedy appointment of some such agent becomes the more necessary at this time because of the failure on the part of Congress to establish a Bureau of Freedmen's Affairs, to which the management of these interests would have properly belonged.

We believe that by complying with the requests of this memorial you will subserve the cause of humanity, and forward the consummation of that noble act of your administration by which you proclaimed that the slave should henceforth be forever free.

The report was received; and, on motion, the first part was taken up separately, and after considerable discussion was unanimously adopted. A motion was then made to lay the remaining portion, referring to the appointment of a general Supervising Agent by the President, on the table; and, the yeas and nays being called for, the motion was lost, but three votes being recorded in its favor. The motion to adopt, after further discussion, was then carried unanimously.

The whole memorial was then referred to the several Commissions for their approval.

The following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That we request each of our Associations to appoint one person as a member of a special committee to fill the blank in the memorial, and present it in person to the President; and, further, that we request delegates here to secure an early meeting of their respective Associations to take action on these matters.

On motion of Mr. Walden the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That this Convention request the President and Secretary of the United States Commission for the relief of the National Freedmen to call a meeting of all the Freedmen's Aid Societies of the country at as early a day as practicable.

On motion, the Secretary of the Convention was directed to have one thousand copies of the minutes thereof printed in pamphlet form, and the delegates were requested to furnish him for publication therein the substance of their remarks in regard to their respective Commissions made before the Convention.

After some congratulatory and happy remarks by the President, the Convention adjourned *sine die*, and was closed with prayer by the Rev. S. B. Page, of Cleveland.

JAMES BLAKE, *President.*

WM. PENN NIXON, *Secretary.*

ESTIMATE OF CONTRIBUTIONS.

The following table, collated from the reports made before the Convention, presents a proximate exhibit of the collections of money and supplies by the several Commissions represented:

ASSOCIATIONS.	Cash.....	Supplies..	Total.....
Western Sanitary Commission, St. Louis	$15,000	$40,000	$55,000
North-Western F. A. Com., Chicago, organized Jan. 1, 1864	14,700	17,500	32,200
Indiana F. A. Commission, organized September, 1863	9,000	13,000	22,000
Indiana Friends' Aid Committee, organized October, 1863	23,000	10,000	33,000
Western F. A. Commission, organized January, 1863	26,000	*	26,000
Contraband Relief Commission, organized November, 1862	30,000	50,000	80,000
Cleveland F. A. Commission, organized April, 1863	8,000	10,000	18,000
Grand Total	$127,700	$140,500	$268,200

* No cash estimate made of supplies received. The Commission has distributed one hundred and twenty-one tuns.

APPENDIX.

REPORT OF INDIANA FREEDMEN'S AID COMMISSION.

J. S. WILLETS, General Agent of the Indiana Freedmen's Aid Commission, submitted the following:

The Indiana Freedmen's Aid Commission was organized in September, 1863. The business of the Association is confided to a Board of Managers, consisting of a President, two Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Recording and Corresponding Secretaries, and seven Directors. A General Agent and two Collecting Agents were appointed; and on the 17th of September a circular was issued, directed to "Ministers of the Gospel and Friends of the Freedmen," and widely circulated in every county of the State, earnestly appealing to the benevolent for their sympathy and aid in this "work of faith and labor of love." The Agents visited various portions of the State, appointing meetings and addressing the people, and forming Branch Associations.

The whole amount of cash received up to the present time is upward of $9,000; clothing and merchandise, over $13,500; cash expended, a little over $7,700—nearly one-half of which has been paid over to the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, Cincinnati; the remainder, for teachers' salaries, books, and sundries for freedmen, transportation, and various expenses.

A large portion of the clothing has been forwarded through the Cincinnati Commission, besides which large amounts have been forwarded to Cairo, Fort Donelson, Helena, Vicksburg, Natchez, Memphis, Clarksville, Nashville, Murfreesboro, Chattanooga, Stephenson, and Pulaski.

A number of teachers were recommended to the Cincinnati Board, and commissioned by them; since which ten teachers have been commissioned by this Board, and located: one at Nashville, three at Murfreesboro, two at Clarksville, two at Providence, and two at Fort Donelson. Three have returned; the others are still engaged. The schools have been largely attended, and the progress of the scholars satisfactory.

REPORT OF CLEVELAND FREEDMEN'S AID COMMISSION.

H. B. SPELMAN, President of the Cleveland Freedmen's Aid Commission, presented the following report:

The Cleveland Freedmen's Aid Commission was organized in April, 1863. Its field of operations for the collection of clothing and money extended over Northern Ohio, and into Western Pennsylvania, Western New York, and Eastern Michigan. During the first three months after its organization, Chaplain J. R. Locke, detailed by General Grant to canvass for supplies for the freedmen in the Valley of the Mississippi, labored under the auspices of our Commission, sending a large portion of his collections direct to the Freedmen's Camp. Since Chaplain Locke left us we have had no Canvassing Agents in our field.

During July, August, September, and October very little was done. In November we issued a circular, making an earnest appeal for money and clothing. Ten thousand copies were distributed. As a response to our circular, and to the efforts of Chaplain Locke, reported to our Commission, we have received five hundred boxes of clothing, valued at $10,000, and $8,000 in money; making $18,000. We intend to enter upon the work early this Fall, and by pursuing it vigorously expect to obtain much larger sums this year.

REPORT OF INDIANA YEARLY MEETING.

The delegates from Indiana Yearly Meeting's Committee being called upon, Joseph Dickinson submitted the following:

The Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends has had committees appointed to assist and educate the colored people nearly ever since they began to settle in that State. The Society long ago labored hard and continuously with their members living in Virginia and North and South Carolina, who held slaves, that they should liberate them, which eventually was done. Those freed people, with many others liberated by other persons, and consigned to the care of the Society of Friends, were many of them moved to the Western States, and received the care of the above committee. But in the Fall of 1863 the claims of the freedmen in the South came prominently before the Annual Conference of this Society, and a reorganization was considered necessary, and an Executive Committee of twelve was appointed to solicit contributions, and superintend the distribution of such relief by agents in the Mississippi Valley; also to provide teachers and other Christian laborers to prepare them for their new position as freedmen.

The Executive Committee soon organized and issued a circular, appealing for aid, and with the co-operation of Branch Committees liberal subscriptions of money were promptly entered into, and a large amount of part-worn clothing was soon collected. Agents were sent to inspect the wants of the freedmen, and attend to the distribution of clothing. Teachers soon followed; large schools were quickly organized, though in one instance both a house to live in and school-houses had to be built first. We have been favored to obtain persons of ability and Christian piety for agents; also experienced and well-qualified teachers for the schools.

The result of our observation is, that we have found the freedmen most grateful for present relief from suffering, and intensely eager to obtain education. The uniform testimony of our teachers is, that they learn with avidity; and they are religiously inclined. We have had about twenty agents and teachers employed at various places in the Mississippi Valley; namely, in the vicinity of Vicksburg, at Helena, Island No. 63, Nashville, and Pulaski.

Our cash receipts since last Fall amount to about $23,000; about $7,000 of this was received from England. Suitable goods for clothing was bought with this fund; also school-books and slates for the schools; a considerable quantity of seeds, and some plows, hoes, etc. Nearly all the new goods were made up into suitable clothing, free of cost, by sewing parties got up for that purpose. A small quantity of new goods was sent to be made up into clothing in such camps as were well organized.

All the business of this Executive Committee to this date, also the labor of receiving and shipping agents, has been done without payment. Our agents and teachers have been paid a small salary and their traveling expenses.

We have met with some difficulties by the frequent removal of camps of the freedmen with whom we have been laboring, and much danger from guerrilla parties; and our operations south of Nashville, which were of a very promising character, were suddenly stopped by Gen. Sherman's order that citizens must not pass south of Nashville.

REPORT OF THE CONTRABANDS' RELIEF COMMISSION.

GEORGE GRAHAM, a delegate from the Contrabands' Relief Commission of Cincinnati, being called on for a report, stated:

That he presumed it would be expected by the Convention that, in following the course pursued by other delegations who preceded him, a history and statistical account of the Commission which he represented would be furnished. In doing this he asked to be excused, as he was not aware of his appointment as a delegate till Saturday, when he learned it from the minutes of a previous meeting; therefore he appeared here without any knowledge of the business to be offered in the Convention, or of the subjects which might come up for discussion. In relation to the finances and business of the Contrabands' Relief Commission, he could only give general statements from memory and unofficial, as he was here without the official statements from the books.

In giving a brief history of the origin of the Contrabands' Relief Commission, he would state that he believed it was the first institution of the kind organized in the West, and originated after the victories of the Union army in Tennessee, when the occupation of the country by Union troops caused the slave-owners of the rebels to desert their plantations, and to fly for safety; consequently, the slaves and their families, left destitute, sought for food and safety in Union camps, and in many of the large towns on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. In this flight they had gathered up the little they could possibly carry on a long march, and walked—men, women, and children, the aged and the infirm, with their little ones—many miles to a place of safety. In this destitute condition, it was reported in Cincinnati that these slaves could not exist during the Winter without provisions, shelter, and clothing; and, unless prompt measures would be adopted by the humane and benevolent, one-half of them must perish with hunger and cold. It was, therefore, suggested that a benevolent society should be immediately organized to send them food and clothing, at such points where such contributions were most needed. At a meeting called for this purpose the Contrabands' Relief Commission was organized, and immediate measures taken to send food and clothing, and to provide shelter from the inclemency of the approaching Winter, the contributors at that time believing that the physical wants of these people ought to be the first consideration, and receive their first attention; consequently, for the first two or three months the subject of education and spiritual instruction was a secondary object—to come in after their physical comforts had been secured.

The Commission thus collected clothing, food, and contributions in money, operating chiefly in the small circles of benevolent individuals who were disposed to assist them. No agents were appointed to collect funds, nor charitable meetings called to awaken the public mind; but the members of the Commission, knowing the liberality of the city of Cincinnati, were not disappointed in receiving supplies promptly and liberally.

At Cairo, Illinois, a large number of contrabands had collected, who were in a very destitute condition, and the Government having possession of Island No. 10, an order was issued to transfer the colored population

with their families to that point, which was considered a suitable place for agricultural purposes, and a point where the negroes might sustain themselves after they were supplied with proper implements. The Contrabands' Commission then undertook to send them agricultural implements, and every thing necessary for a Spring crop, to sustain four or five thousand people. They also sent an agent to distribute supplies, and to superintend the farming of the cleared land on the island which amounted to several hundred acres in good condition for immediate planting. The colored people on this island entered cheerfully and willingly into the labor of making this their home, and were successful in making themselves comfortable, with a prospect of crops sufficient to maintain the population. The agent also organized schools, and erected a school-house, which was sent from Cincinnati, the lumber, books, etc., having been furnished by our Commission. This happy state of things, however, did not last long. An order enlisting negro troops had been received, and about fifteen hundred men were required from Island No. 10 and the neighboring camps. Thus, the laboring class having been taken to the army, the infirm, with the women and children, were left to take care of the crops. Memphis, Corinth, and Vicksburg were taken by the Union army, and at all these points great accessions were made to the camps of the negroes—all coming in destitute, and requiring immediate relief. The agent from Island No. 10 was transferred to Vicksburg for a larger field of operations, and our shipments of goods were increased to Cairo, Corinth, Memphis, Young's Point, and Vicksburg—Colonel Eaton acting for us as a supervising agent at points where our own agent could not be present. In January, a few months after the organization of the Contrabands' Commission, another society named the "Freedmen's Aid Commission" was organized from some of the original members of the Contrabands' Commission, who preferred a separate organization. This institution is represented here, and will of course report to the Convention. Thus we have two organizations acting in the same benevolent field for the same object. This separation from the original institution was perhaps better for both, as their exertions were increased, and a wider field for contributions secured by the friends of both societies. I will here remark, Mr. Chairman, that we have been much indebted in our organization to several benevolent societies of friends in England for large contributions in money, which have been sent at stated periods for the purchase of food and clothing for the freedmen of the South. We have also received large shipments of clothing from the West and two societies of Friends in Philadelphia, which we have forwarded, under their direction, to different points in the South.

Since the occupation of Tennessee by the Union army we have sent supplies to Nashville, Murfreesboro, Knoxville, and other places, in which we frequently included books, necessary for the establishment of schools, and in some cases we have sent teachers at a fixed salary, who report to us an astonishing degree of interest and aptitude in the negro children to acquire the rudiments of an education.

I will here remark that, after furnishing several hundred hoes, plows, and many other agricultural implements, we have not had at Island No. 10 an authorized agent to take charge of our business, and the Government officers having taken away the working class of negroes from the island, we are without a proper control of the property shipped to that island. We, therefore, apprehend a loss of property and implements for want of a proper supervising agent to take care of the property.

Mr. Chairman, this brief and perhaps incomplete statement to the Convention is made from a few moments' reflection, and does not include all that might be said. The amount of business done by the Contrabands' Relief Association of Cincinnati can be given when called for from the store-keeper's books in Cincinnati.

In conclusion, allow me to remark that the friends of the freedmen operating with our institution, have in many instances diverted their attention to societies of the same character in their own neighborhoods, and some of them have delegates here to report. This may diminish contributions from us, but increase the aggregate for the general charity, so important to the freedmen and our common country.

ACCOUNT,

Taken from the Business Books of the Contrabands' Relief Commission of Cincinnati, O., which includes the principal shipments made since the organizatiou of the Institution to various places in the Mississippi Valley.

ARTICLES.	Number....	Value.....
Women's and Children's Garments	16,937	.....
Men's and Boys' Garments	13,628	.....
Comfortables for Bedding	594	.....
Blankets for Bedding	613	.....
Heavy Goods for Clothing, yards	2,678	.....
Cooking Utensils, various kinds	966	.....
Shoes, Men's and Women's, pairs	355	.....
School-Books, Testaments, Spellers, and Tracts, to various places	10,000	.....
Shipped to Island No. 10.		
Garden-Seed, packages	8,000	.....
Sweet-Potato Plants	50,000	.....
Irish Potatoes, barrels	155	.....
A low estimate of the above may be put down at	.....	$46,000
Lumber, Hardware, Agricultural Implements, etc	.....	4,000
Goods on Hand.		
Women's and Children's Garments, made up	1,800	2,800
Men's and Boys' Garments, made up and ready for shipping	7,900	15,800
Blankets, part second-hand	2,500	5,000
Cash on hand in Treasury	.....	7,800
Total	.....	$81,400

Forwarded for Friends' Society, Philadelphia, 48 boxes; 2 bales of Blankets. Friends' Relief Association, Philadelphia, 12 boxes.

July 22, 1864.

REPORT OF THE N. W. FREEDMEN'S AID COMMISSION.

Rev. J. R. Shipherd, delegate from the North-Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, submitted the following:

This is the youngest of the Commissions. Our late accession to the work was due, not to any deficiency of interest, but to a lack of opportunity. Our field of operations would almost necessarily be in the Mississippi Valley. Only a few months have elapsed since the Father of Waters could be even rhetorically said to go unvexed to the sea. At Port Royal, at Fortress Monroe, in North Carolina and Northern Virginia, in Kentucky and parts of Tennessee, and at isolated points upon the Mississippi, reached under cover of military movements pushed from eastern points westward, the benevolent people of the East were early invited to work, and waited for no second call. We, as the opportunity came to us, have not shown a greater indifference.

In July last steps were taken by the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission at Cincinnati, and by the American Missionary Association at New York, to solicit aid in North-Western States. Each Society sent an agent into the field, and each in turn moved for the organization of an auxiliary committee in this city. The efforts of the latter were successful in this regard—eight pastors of city Churches consenting to act executively in co-operation with the Association and its collecting agent. Meanwhile, and for months previously, spontaneous contributions of stores, marked "For the Freedmen," were placed at the disposal of the North-Western Sanitary Commission, and large contributions of money were urged upon Eastern Societies, and upon Western gentlemen who were supposed to have facilities for using them to the advantage of the freed people.

Between the 1st of July and the 1st of January following, not less than $50,000 worth of contributions in stores and money are known to have been made by citizens of North-Western States.

Early in November it became apparent that there was an imperative need of a North-Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, to give unity and the highest efficiency to North-Western benevolence. Due consultation was had between all the interests represented upon the collecting field, resulting in a perfectly-harmonious consolidation of agencies, and the establishment, on the first day of January, of the present organization.

For the first forty days the Commission had no salaried executive officer, but divided its labors among willing, although overburdened, city pastors. By the expiration of this period it had become sufficiently evident that it was unwise to delay longer the selection of some person who could devote to the details of the work his undivided attention. Such a selection having been made, a suitable office was secured and opened to the public.

The needs of the freed people, which we have undertaken to relieve, are of two kinds: such as pertain to their physical condition, and such as pertain to their social, their educational, and their moral welfare. Under the first title are found all physical wants. These people are hungry, and naked, and homeless, and sick.

It is found, however, that the Government will, so far as it is possible, issue them army rations for food, and provide them such nominal shelter as it can in rude barracks or camps. Of late, also, it has moved vigorously toward providing them medical aid. Moreover, it will employ all able-bodied men, and immediately issue them comfortable clothing. The chief deficiency, therefore, is in the lack of supplies which, for obvious reasons, the Government can not furnish; namely, *clothing for women and children.*

We have, therefore, appealed to the benevolent public for second-hand garments for women's and children's wear, and have not appealed in vain. About fifteen tuns of these have been consigned to us, and forwarded through our own agents, since the opening of the year.

We have also received about twenty tuns of men's clothing, which has been forwarded to and distributed by one of our own agents to the infirm and aged men, who are gathered with the women and children in the camps. We have repeatedly called the attention of our friends to the fact that the need of garments for women's and children's wear is much greater than the need of garments for men's wear; but, as the donations persistently preserve the contrary proportion, we conclude that our friends give all they can spare of *every kind* of garments in their houses, and the revered *patres familiarum* are found able to give most.

This Commission has already sent forward thirty-seven Christian men and women to do what they may be able to do of this eminently Christian missionary work. We have or have had teachers at Island No. 63, at Memphis, at Nashville, at Columbus, Kentucky, at Helena, at Goodrich's

Landing, at Lake Providence, at Van Buren's Landing, at Milliken's Bend, at Paw-Paw Island, upon the Reighley and Savage Plantations, at Island No. 102, at Natchez, at Baton Rouge, at New Orleans, and at Rolla, Mo.

This is a terrible scattering of forces—the very antipode of our earnest longing and deliberate purpose. Our choice would be to locate ALL our teachers in a single neighborhood, where supervision, and system, and mutual support might avail their utmost. And here we have found our great difficulty—our operations are at the mercy of the chances of war, the malice of disloyal officials, and the omnipotence of King Cotton.

To the division of labor especial attention has been directed. Our purpose has been to collect and forward teachers in parties of considerable size to a single unoccupied or nearly unoccupied point; to detail the most suitable matron of the party as responsible superintendent of domestic and sanitary affairs; the most experienced teacher as superintendent of schools; the eldest minister of the Gospel as superintendent of religious affairs; authorizing each of these to elect by natural affinities such of their associates as will most efficiently aid each in his or her distinct department. By this means a greatly-increased efficiency and a most substantial harmony are secured, and the labor of general supervision at the home office is materially simplified.

All stores of donated goods are forwarded in the personal care of a special agent, or teacher detailed for the work, from the home office to the point of destination, where they are turned over to the Superintendent of Domestic and Sanitary Affairs, who becomes at once responsible for their safe-keeping and their proper distribution. To her each teacher represents the most urgent wants in his or her own charge, and from her receives such proportion of the stores as the interests of the entire locality will permit.

Every superintendent and every teacher reports weekly for the first month, and afterward monthly, upon eight distinct points, covering the whole range of the work within his or her reach. Special agents, from time to time, visit the various localities, and report fully upon all they see. And the Secretary himself, so far as other duties at all permit, will personally visit the field, and ascertain by immediate inspection the precise condition of the work, and the relative efficiency of the laborers.

The Commission was applied to on behalf of a school for adult freed people in Chicago, which had been for some time sustained by the spontaneous contributions of a few benevolent gentlemen and ladies. These friends of the school had at best been able to provide it but uncertain support, and proposed to turn their contributions into the treasury of the Commission, very much enlarging them at the same time if the Commission would officially assume the salaries and supervision of the teachers. A committee was appointed to investigate the facts, and made so favorable a report that the proposal was accepted, and two teachers are now employed by the Commission at No. 222 Fourth-Avenue.

FINANCIAL EXHIBIT.

The following extracts from the report of the Corresponding Secretary, presented at the late anniversary of the Commission, will give the reader some idea of what has been accomplished since the 1st of January:

The summary of accounts on the books of the committee, brought down to the nearest convenient date—that is, to the 9th of April, inclusive—and covering the business of precisely one hundred days, reads thus:

RECEIPTS.

Stores, 294 packages, valued at	$12,480 00
Cash	5,762 79
Due the Treasury	2,503 19
Making a total of	$20,745 98

DISBURSEMENTS.

Stores, 279 packages, valued at	$11,730 00
Cash	8,265 98
Goods on hand	750 00
Making a total of	$20,745 98

The cash items of expenditures are classified in the report of the Committee on Finance as follows:

For teachers, their outfit, traveling expenses, and two months advance pay	$4,974 91
Transportation, including freight, postage, telegraph, and travel, (other than of teachers)	887 84
Printing and stationery	587 38
Office rent and fixtures	620 10
Agencies, including salaried employés of every kind, (other than teachers)	1,195 75
In all	$8,265 98

From the 10th of April to the 30th of June the receipts of cash were nearly $9,000 and the value of supplies received upward of $5,000. These aggregates would stand—

Stores	$12,480 00
"	5,000 00
Cash	5,762 79
"	9,000 00
Total	$32,242 79

for six months. While this amount has exceeded the expectations with which we began, it has seemed small indeed beside the overshadowing need. If to this sum we should add, as some Commissions do, and as perhaps all ought, the value of contributions by railway, telegraph, and express lines, steamboat owners, etc., and the gratuitous services of volunteer laborers, the aggregate would be largely increased. But we hope to secure still larger gifts in the months to come.

I should perhaps omit an important allusion, if I should close without mention of the constituency to which this Commission is immediately responsible.

Every donor of five dollars or upward, becomes an elector for one year; every donor of twenty dollars or upward, becomes an elector for life. On the second Friday of April in each year, these electors assemble and choose the directors for the ensuing twelve months; and no person, with a single exception, can become an officer of the Commission unless he shall have been first chosen a director. The Constitution can not be changed by the directors, but only at the annual meeting by the sovereign electors, who are entitled individually, at any and all times, to any information in regard to the management of the work which they may desire. Any elector is eligible to the Board of Directors, and any person may become an elector. The most catholic basis attainable is thus laid down by those who were interested to take this work in hand at the first, and with the sincerest cordiality they invite the co-operation of every loyal, humane, and Christian citizen of the North-West.

REPORT OF THE WESTERN SANITARY COMMISSION.

Rev. J. G. Forman, Secretary and delegate of the Western Sanitary Commission at St. Louis, made the following report:

The labors of the Western Sanitary Commission for Freedmen have been *incidental* to its main work, which has been the supplying of sanitary stores to the Western armies, and to the Naval Flotilla of the Mississippi River. In the Fall of 1862 it became aware of great suffering among the colored people at Helena, Arkansas, and took measures for their relief.

Large numbers of freedmen came into Helena with the army of General Curtis in July of that year, and from the rebel plantations above and below, and from across the river, to the number of about four thousand. Many of them were put to work upon the fortifications, and employed by the quarter-masters to load and unload steamboats and coal barges, and as teamsters, with the promise of wages at ten dollars a month. In these labors they were industrious and faithful, and their temperate habits and good conduct were worthy of the highest praise. All of them who could give any evidence of having been employed by their masters to aid the rebellion received free papers from Major-General Curtis, who was always just and friendly to them, and willing to listen to their complaints.

Unfortunately for these people General Curtis was transferred to St. Louis, the latter part of the next month, to command the Department of Missouri, and was followed by a succession of pro-slavery Brigadier-Generals, who passed military orders withholding the payment of their wages, expelling them from their lines, and otherwise persecuting them, under which rule many of them were returned to their masters, and those who remained suffered untold hardships. With the indifference of the commanders to their welfare, the quarter-masters neglected to keep full and correct pay rolls, and press-gangs of mounted orderlies were sent through the streets of Helena, who brought them to the levee and compelled them to work without wages or food till they sometimes fell down with exhaustion. Murders, rapes, and robberies were committed upon them by the worst class of the soldiers with impunity, and the military commanders took no notice of these things.

As Winter came these people, being poorly sheltered in huts, worn-out tents, and the most uninhabitable buildings, and very miserably clad, unpaid for their labor, and destitute, suffered incredible hardships, and died in large numbers. The hospital building assigned them was a miserable, one-story house, surrounded by mud, where they were put under the charge of a pro-slavery contract-physician, who utterly neglected them, and in which they had no better accommodation than a straw bed on the floor, being without chairs, tables, stoves, cooking utensils, or any of the usual furniture either of a dwelling-house or a hospital. The mortality in this hospital in December and January, 1862–63, was fifty per cent. of all who entered; so that the sick freed people often preferred death in any other place to going there.

On becoming acquainted with this state of things, the Western Sanitary Commission, in the early part of January, 1863, sent Miss Maria R. Mann, a niece of the late Hon. Horace Mann, a most philanthropic and excellent lady, to Helena, with all the furniture and outfit of a good hospital, with sanitary stores and clothing also for the sick, the poor and neglected; and this lady staid there till the next August, laboring with myself and the Rev. Samuel Sawyer, who were at that time chaplains at that post, for the amelioration of these poor people.

During this period a great change was effected. In February Adjutant-General Thomas came to Helena, and announced that the future policy of the Government would be to protect and care for the colored people who came to our lines, and to enlist the able-bodied men as soldiers, and that any officer, from a General to a Lieutenant, who should undertake to thwart this policy would lose his shoulder straps.

It was astonishing to see what a change occurred in the sentiment of the army from this time. We were now able to get a large and good building for a freedmen's hospital, and many became candidates for commissions in the new colored regiments, who a few months before could find nothing too hard to say against the black man. In several of these cases I had the satisfaction of defeating the aspirations of these gentlemen by reporting their true character at the right place.

During the eight months Miss Mann remained at Helena, about $5,000 was expended for the benefit of the freed people, mostly contributions received by Rev. Dr. Elliott from friends in New England for this special purpose, and when she left there was but little suffering among them. Two regiments of colored troops were recruited there, and those who were left became self-supporting.

At a later period the Commission has sent additional clothing to Chaplain John I. Herrick and Chaplain Locke, superintendents of freedmen at Helena, to meet their necessities during the Fall and Winter of 1863–64, in value amounting to about $3,000, a portion of which has been returned from proceeds of sales to those who could pay for what they received.

During the Fall of 1863 the Western Sanitary Commission delegated its President, James E. Yeatman, Esq., to make a visit to the freedmen's camps from Cairo to Natchez, to ascertain their condition and wants, with a view to undertaking their relief. At the same time it sent an agent, Rev. H. D. Fisher, to New England to present the claims of these people, and the purpose of the Commission to engage in the work of relief, as a part of its future operations. The appeal was responded to in a most liberal spirit, and about $45,000 in goods and money was contributed from Boston and the larger towns of Massachusetts. About the same time the National Freedmen's Relief Association at New York was formed, and sent two agents, Messrs. W. L. Marsh and H. R. Foster, to proceed to Vicksburg, and take charge of the work of distribution and of teaching at that point, at Natchez, and wherever else they found a need. On their way these gentlemen formed a connection with the Western Sanitary Commission, as voluntary agents, in addition to their existing agency, for the purpose of co-operation—the Sanitary Commission reshipping their goods at St. Louis, and sending its own supplies for their distribution.

Three excellent teachers were also sent by the Western Sanitary Commission to labor under the direction of Messrs. Marsh and Foster; namely, Miss Sarah Hagan, who has since died in the service, Miss A. M. Knight, and Mrs. Lydia H. Daggett.

The plan of the Commission has been to use all the reliable and trustworthy agents already in the field instead of increasing and multiplying agencies. It has, therefore, worked with all the Freedmen's Relief Associations in the West, and used their agencies instead of its own. It has sent goods to Mr. Elkanah Beard, to Mr. Roundtree, and to the superintendents of freedmen along the river, in addition to Messrs. Marsh and Foster at Vicksburg and Natchez. It has probably procured transportation for $100,000 worth of clothing, shoes, and material for clothes for the freed people along the Lower Mississippi during the past year, which includes the shipments of the National Association, coming by St. Louis, as well as its own.

At the late Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair in St. Louis $15,000 more has been received for this work and for the destitute Union refugees, of whom thousands are now coming to St. Louis from the devastated regions of Arkansas and the other insurrectionary States. For these there is also a work of benevolence to be done, and our Commission has never felt itself at liberty to decline aiding those who have been loyal sufferers by this great war for the preservation of our country and liberty. But it has been careful to make its labors for the freedmen and refugees a separate work from its general sanitary labors for the army, and to secure special funds for these humanities of the war. It authorizes me to say that it will ever stand ready to act in co-operation with the Freedmen's Relief Associations in their great work, or to relinquish this branch of its labors when they shall no longer be found necessary, by reason of the existence and efficient labors of those Associations which now make this their special mission.

REPORT OF WESTERN FREEDMEN'S AID COMMISSION.

THE following has been received from Rev. J. M. Walden, Corresponding Secretary of Western Freedmen's Aid Commission:

In pursuance with the resolution of the Convention at Indianapolis, the following report is submitted in behalf of the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission to the Convention:

In this statement I may, following the example of other delegates, refer to the formation and early history of our Association.

THE WESTERN FREEDMEN'S AID COMMISSION was organized in Cincinnati, Ohio, in January, 1863, by a number of Christian gentlemen—several of them well-known ministers of the Gospel of various denominations in that city—who withdrew from the Contrabands' Relief Commission under circumstances and for reasons alluded to by the delegate of that Society—Mr. Graham—the chief of which, as he has stated, was a difference of opinion as to the course that should be pursued in applying the means of which that Society became the almoner. In regard to the policy to be pursued the Board of Directors were about equally divided, and, the difference being radical, it was evident that their action could not be harmonious. Those who withdrew immediately organized the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, with this declaration, indicative of the views they entertained, and illustrative of the spirit by which they were actuated:

"The new Society proposes, first of all, to supply the physical wants of the freedmen—to give food to the hungry, garments to the naked, and medicines to the sick. But this is a temporary work. These thousands must not be left long in the condition of ignorant paupers, for this would defeat the whole scheme of emancipation. They must be instructed, guided, elevated, and prepared for the position and duties of Christian freemen, and for this purpose school books, Bibles, Testaments, and teachers must be provided. These increasing thousands can not long remain in a homeless condition, herded like cattle around our military posts. Efforts must, therefore, be made to locate them upon Southern soil, and organize them into communities, that they may receive the institutions of Christian civilization, in order that they may support themselves, and even add to the general wealth."

In thus entering upon the work, it was accepted in its two-fold character of patriotic aid to the Government in a rightful effort to vindicate its authority, and of Christian benevolence toward those whose bondage was the chief cause of the rebellion, and whose emancipation promised to be one of the glorious results of the war.

With a Board of Directors in which many of the largest religious denominations were represented by prominent ministers or active laymen, and governed in its operations by the foregoing principles, the Commission soon received the sympathy of the Christian public, before which Providence was opening one of the most interesting and extended fields that ever invited humane and benevolent effort.

Levi Coffin, our General Agent, gave some time to collecting funds and supplies for our Commission after its organization, operating principally among the Friends. He is now in England, where, according to reports in leading journals, he meets with a cordial reception, and is likely to obtain liberal aid. In the Summer of 1863 we employed Rev. H. W. Cobb, of Chicago, as a Collecting Agent, assigning to him Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin—the whole North-West then being before us as a contributing field. He canvassed considerable portions of those States, receiving contributions and establishing auxiliary societies at many points. When the

friends in Chicago determined to organize a Commission for the North-West they applied to us, and we consented to the transfer of Mr. Cobb to their Commission, for which he is still laboring with success in the field he opened up in our service. He collected about three thousand dollars for us. The Indiana Commission, auxiliary to ours, undertook to canvass Indiana, and has prosecuted the work with vigor. It has turned over to our treasurer more than three thousand dollars, besides all that it has expended directly in behalf of the freedmen. Rev. Joshua Boucher canvassed a part of Ohio last Summer, but the whole State has not been thoroughly canvassed. We have at length secured, what is difficult to find, some efficient agents for this work, and arrangements are made for its prosecution. We have not received any foreign contributions, except £50 sterling, sent to Levi Coffin by William Foster, of England. About $26,000 have been paid into our treasury, and a large proportion of this sum is the voluntary contribution of persons and societies to whom no personal appeal has been made—a fact I mention to indicate the interest of the humane and benevolent in the cause of the freedmen. Our Board approves it as wise to keep efficient collecting agents in the field, and to organize auxiliary societies wherever practicable. It is the duty of our Commissions to use every proper means to turn the attention of the public to the freed people, not only that the means of relief may be augmented, but that there may be a general and increasing interest in their civil and religious as well as their physical condition.

The work of relief was fairly begun by the Commission early in February, 1863. Since then we have distributed 68,758 garments; 1,416 pairs of shoes; 754 pairs of socks and stockings; 385 articles of bedding; 2,872 yards of new goods; 5 cooking stoves; 4,611 cooking and kitchen utensils; and have shipped twenty-nine tuns of such supplies for other Associations.

As the Spring of 1863 opened another form of relief suggested itself as both practicable and desirable; namely, placing in the hands of the freed people the means of industry, encouraging them at once to look to their own free labor for at least a part of their support. Large quantities of garden seeds and farm and garden implements were shipped to the camps on the Mississippi. We have distributed 843 farm and garden implements, 695 pounds and 15,172 packages of garden seeds, and have furnished one cane-mill and evaporator, and two sewing-machines—these last to be used by our teachers for the benefit of the schools and hospitals. Other Associations have pursued the same course; and wherever such supplies have reached the freedmen they have used them industriously and with encouraging success.

Although a resolution was adopted by our Commission, at the second meeting after its organization, to secure Christian teachers to labor among the freedmen, none were employed till in March, 1863. During this month two persons were commissioned—one of whom, J. L. Roberts, has been in the field ever since, and is now rendering valuable service at Helena, Arkansas. Notwithstanding the physical want and sufferings of the freedmen, our agents with the means of temporal relief have scarcely been more welcome to the camps than our teachers. As the day of freedom dawns upon this people, it seems every-where to inspire them with a desire to read. Books, so long withheld by slavery, are received and studied by them as though they were the token and pledge of their emancipation. They will not be satisfied, nor should we, till every school, and camp, and regiment is supplied with school books, Bibles, and Testaments. It is cause for gratitude, and an assurance of security, and may well be an incentive to the most active charity, that, as they come forth from their long night of thralldom to take a new position in the world, this people manifest this passion to read.

A school, to attain the highest results among the freedmen, must be adapted to their condition, and even comprehend more in some respects than among us. They must learn from the teacher a great many things essential to their elevation which, in a free community, our sons and daughters learn in the home and from society. The teachers who labor among them, under the auspices of our Commission, are expected not only to teach reading, writing, and other useful branches, but also to give such instructions in ordinary domestic and industrial habits as will make them neat in their homes, economical in their customs, and thrifty in their pursuits. Our schools hereafter will be furnished with thread, needles, thimbles, and the like, as regularly as with books, pens, and paper, that the teachers may devote some time each day to teaching the females such homely and practical branches as cutting, and making, and even mending clothes.

We have commissioned some sixty teachers, most of them females, though we may not have had in the field at any one time more than about half that number. These, because of circumstances beyond our control, have been scattered over a considerable portion of the Mississippi Valley. They have labored in schools at Cairo, Columbus, Kentucky, Island No. 10, Memphis, President's Island, Camp Holly Springs, Helena, Milliken's Bend, Vicksburg, Natchez, Little Rock, Arkansas, Nashville, Murfreesboro, Clarksville, Fort Donelson, and Gallatin, Tennessee, and in several colored regiments on the Mississippi and in Tennessee. Besides the means expended in employing, transporting and providing for these teachers, we have furnished 41,185 new and 628 old school books, 1,515 slates, and a considerable quantity of paper, pens, and pencils. We have also furnished books to several regiments of colored soldiers, and at times to schools under the auspices of other societies.

The religious element entering so largely into the organization of our Commission, it is not strange that a question arose as to the limit of our operations—whether we should send missionaries to evangelize as well as teachers to instruct the freedmen. The Commission, agreeing that the work of evangelization was authoritatively committed to the Church, and that no organization of merely human origin is warranted in subverting the Divine plan, determined to leave to the Church the whole work of sending missionaries and organizing Churches. Its policy is, however, to employ only Christian persons as teachers; to encourage the organization of Sabbath schools; to send Bibles and Testaments to the freedmen; to influence them, so far as may be, to observe the Sabbath, and to attend the public worship of God; and to inculcate sentiments of respect for religion. If ministers of the Gospel engage with us as teachers, it is not for us to prohibit their preaching—our aim being to direct all our agencies so that they shall exert an influence that will be favorable to the coming work of evangelization among the freedmen, upon which the whole Church must speedily enter.

We have taken steps to establish an "Industrial school" at Memphis. Such schools will be efficient in the elevation of this people. In them the women and girls can be taught to sew neatly and well, and to cut and make necessary articles of clothing. By compensating them for this labor they may begin to provide for themselves by their own industry. Place these schools under the direction of competent persons, and large quantities of new goods might there be made into garments, and second-hand clothing repaired and refitted so as to render it far more serviceable than if distributed as received. By proper and energetic movements in this direction these schools would, after a little time, become so effective as to relieve from a double task many of those societies of noble women in the North, who, prompted by feelings of humanity and patriotism, are dividing their increased labors between the soldier and the freedmen. The

careful habits, the notions of economy, and the feelings of self-reliance developed by such schools, will be an incalculable blessing to many, besides those who are employed and instruc ed in them. In fact, these schools are indispensable to the highest results of Christian benevolence in behalf of the freed people. One or more should be established and supported in every camp, and supplied with plain materials for the manufacture of the most needful clothing, bedding, etc.

A General Superintendent of Freedmen on the Mississippi had been appointed, with powers to organize the work of relief. As co-workers with the Government we availed ourselves of the public agencies for the distribution of our supplies. This plan was pursued till an experience of some months proved it to be necessary to appoint agents who should be directly responsible to our Commission. The policy of the Freedmen's Department, however wise and efficient, was not adapted to promote the efficiency of voluntary associations. We seldom received any acknowledgment of the receipt of goods forwarded, or any report of their disposal—whether given to the destitute or sold to those able to purchase. While dependent on the public for the means to carry forward our work, we were thus left without the data to furnish our patrons a satisfactory report—such as would assure their confidence in our operations, and sustain and increase their interest in the cause.

To remedy this defect, to avoid great delays in transportation of supplies, to prevent embarrassing mistakes and frequent losses, and to secure a careful and judicious distribution of the goods among the needy, it was determined to appoint intelligent and responsible men as agents to supervise the whole work of distribution, both of goods and of books. We placed Isaac G. Thorne on the Mississippi River and Rev. D. M. Wilson in Middle Tennessee, making it their duty to canvass as often and thoroughly as possible their respective fields—to visit the camps, ascertain the most needy points, and furnish them with supplies. The immediate work of giving out the goods and books we referred to the persons in charge of the camps and to the teachers, a part of whose duty it is to ascertain the real wants of those for whose improvement they labor. We have a depot at Memphis for the Mississippi River, and one at Nashville for Middle Tennessee and the adjacent territory, to which most of our shipments are consigned, and from which the Agents can draw supplies wherever needed. These Agents account to the Commission for all the supplies they receive and distribute. By this plan we secure the prompt distribution of our goods to those places where there is the greatest need, and among those persons who are really the most destitute. It is due to the Freedmen's Department to say that many of its agents, by a cheerful co-operation with our agents and teachers, have greatly aided and facilitated this work of relief.

You inquire as to the difficulties we have met. Many of those that at first embarrassed our work are now removed. In the beginning we found little sympathy among military officers. The promulgation of the Proclamation of Emancipation did not reveal to them the purposes of the Government with reference to the freedmen, so it was only by a kind of sufferance that any thing could be done in their behalf. We had to pay a heavy tariff for transportation of supplies, whether by railway or steamboat. Shipments on the way to their destination were often detained at military posts, and sometimes kept so long where they were exposed to rain that large quantities were much damaged. Officers not unfrequently refused, in a peremptory manner, to furnish even a temporary store-room or any other facility for the reception and distribution of the much-needed supplies. In far too many instances the only assistance the freedmen received from those in authority was a partial protection from the clutches of their rebel masters, while the representatives of an open-handed charity in the

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North that would have ministered some relief were constantly embarrassed by the indifference of officers, and sometimes by their covert and not unfrequently by their open opposition.

A valuable service was rendered by appointing Colonel Eaton Superintendent of Freedmen on the Mississippi. Though his policy has not in all respects been favorable to the efforts of benevolent associations, yet his appointment gave a head to the work. Since then transportation has been furnished for all goods on the Mississippi; rooms have been turned over for depots; and school-teachers have received rations; and, with a few exceptions, officers have co-operated perhaps as far as under the present *regime* there can be co-operation.

The same embarrassments attended the work in Middle Tennessee. Our agents and teachers at every point have found among the citizens a sentiment hostile to all efforts in behalf of the freedmen—especially those that aim at their elevation. We received but little co-operation from any officers there till General Grant assumed the command of the department. A store-room was then immediately secured at Nashville; an order given for the transportation of all supplies, and another for rations for our teachers. In February a committee from the "United States Commission for the Relief of the National Freedmen" secured from the Secretary of War an order for the transportation of supplies throughout the Mississippi Valley, since which time we have not been embarrassed in regard to transportation except by the occasional indifference or opposition of officials. We know that the Government appreciates and regards with favor what our Associations are doing, and stands ready to co-operate as far as may accord with military regulations.

We are in Convention here to inquire what may be done to give the greatest efficiency to our efforts in behalf of the freed people. The experience of the past indicates that, first of all, there should be the fullest co-operation possible among all of the Associations engaged in this work. A consciousness of this has brought us together; its necessity is made the more apparent by every report submitted, and the ways in which it may be effected already begin to suggest themselves. It is evident that we may have agents and depots for our supplies in common. Application to officers for the aid contributed by the Government might at any one point be made through one careful and judicious person, and with better results than to have these applications multiplied. It is possible that the whole work might be brought under the supervision of a few agents—perhaps one in charge of schools, and one in charge of the distribution of supplies. By such co-operation we could economize and distribute our forces; it would insure greater unity, and therefore greater efficiency, in our operations; it would encourage the spirit of concord among our teachers and agents, and as a consequence would give to us more influence with the representatives of the Government. Again, we need from the President an order that will secure to us from every officer with whom we have to do that co-operation which the truly loyal and those who sympathize with us now render under existing regulations. We also need to secure the public, so far as may be, against being imposed upon by unauthorized agents, who are already, in the name of our societies, asking for contributions. The contributions of the West should be drawn into our own Commissions by responsible and duly-accredited agents.

The attention of the Convention has been called to the number and condition of white refugees that have been and are now flocking within our lines. On the 16th of February, 1863—about a month after our organization—it was declared to be a part of the appropriate work of the Commission to extend sympathy and aid to the thousands of white persons driven from their homes in the South, and our agents have ministered to this destitute class. Levi Coffin and myself had considered the matter

with some care, and were about to recommend to our Board a plan for a definite and extended effort, when the call was published in Cincinnati for the public meeting by which the Refugee Relief Commission was organized. We both attended the meeting, and favored the measures that were adopted. Our agents continue to extend some aid to the refugees, and the Commission is ready to do all that is consistent with the primary object of our organization.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The following is an exhibit of the receipts of our Commission. We have not adopted the plan of estimating the value of second-hand goods received. Without overhauling each package an estimate can not be made that will approximate the real value of the contributions; and the demand for supplies has been so pressing that we have forwarded large quantities without repacking, where they were in good condition for shipment.

Number of garments shipped to various points	68,758
Number of pairs of shoes shipped to various points	1,416
Number of pairs of stockings and socks shipped to various points	754
Number of articles of bedding shipped to various points	385
Number of yards of new goods shipped to various points	2,872
Number of sewing-machines	3
Number of cooking stoves	5
Number of cooking and kitchen utensils	4,611
Number of farm and garden implements	843
Number of pounds of garden seeds	695
Number of packages of garden seeds	15,172
Number of school books, new	41,185
Number of old books	628
Number of slates	1,515
Number of pounds of dried fruit and other hospital supplies	642

Also stationery and other necessary supplies for schools, amounting in all to about 121 tons.

In addition to the above we have shipped for other Associations and for individuals goods to the amount of about 38 tons, making our total shipments 159 tons, besides 8 portable hospitals, comprising 19,800 feet of lumber.

Cash receipts, up to date	$25,941 57
Paid out for salary of teachers, supplies of various kinds, and other necessary expenses	22,187 08
Cash on hand	$3,814 19

JULY 20, 1864.

SOCIETIES OF THE WEST.

The following Associations in the West are laboring in behalf of the Freedmen, given in the order of their organization:

WESTERN SANITARY COMMISSION,

St. Louis, Mo.

JAMES E. YEATMAN, President,
REV. J. G. FORMAN, Secretary.

CONTRABAND RELIEF COMMISSION,

Cincinnati, Ohio.

A. M. TAYLOR, President,
R. W. CARROLL, Corresponding Secretary.

WESTERN FREEDMEN'S AID COMMISSION,

Cincinnati, Ohio.

REV. ADAM POE, D. D., President,
REV. J. M. WALDEN, Corresponding Secretary,
LEVI COFFIN, General Agent.

CLEVELAND FREEDMEN'S AID COMMISSION,

Cleveland, Ohio.

H. B. SPELMAN, President,
L. F. MELLEN, Secretary and Treasurer.

INDIANA FREEDMEN'S AID COMMISSION,

Indianapolis, Ind.

C. FLETCHER, President,
DR. J. T. BOYD, Corresponding Secretary,
JACOB S. WILLETS, General Agent.

NORTH-WESTERN FREEDMEN'S AID COMMISSION,

Chicago, Ill.

HON. J. M. WILSON, President,
REV. J. R. SHIPHERD, Corresponding Secretary.

COMMITTEE OF INDIANA YEARLY MEETING,

Richmond, Ind.

TIMOTHY NICHOLSON, Secretary,
ISAAC P. EVANS, Treasurer,
JOSEPH DICKINSON, Agent.

Note.—The United Presbyterian and United Brethren Churches are also laboring independently in behalf of the Freedmen.

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